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COMMUNICATIONS. ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

A friend to the interests of humanity, "homo sum, & nil humanum a me alienum puto," I therefore sometimes step into the places of public resort, where these interests, and those moral subjects interwoven with and inseparable from them are discussed, I mean the church and the theatre; one presenting sublime topics of most important concern to the ear; the other (the scencical representation) to both eye and ear. Your readers will not, I hope, be offended that I have thus associated these two departments; I do so, because the subject before me, which I have much at heart, they hold in common; I mean "action and utterance, and the power of speech, to move men's minds," which I think is their common concern. If the sound moral which the theatre inculcates, or ought to inculcate, be, and ought to be carried home to men's minds for the conduct of human life, which I am desirous may more and more be the standard rule of scencical exhibition, till every corner of impurity is swept from the theatre by the more correct and exalted taste of the present age; filled, as it is, with a conscious pride of an elevated progress in science, in morals, in taste, and whatever else is perfective of human nature; and that perfection may be accelerated by every means that shall tend to the improvement and advance of the happiness of

the species. If, I say, it be necessary that the theatre be thus improv-ed, then I think a fortiori, (as your logicians say,) as the pulpit has something of a loftier claim, as it holds forth arguments on topics of a still sublimer nature on the scale of excellence; the public actors on that theatre ought to feel the still weightier and more imperious duty to study how they shall in their de-livery give the greatest effect to their superior topic to carry it into the minds of men with a still more commanding effect; and that none step up into that rostrum to d forth and enforce the precepts of their divine master, shall be deficient in the instruments of commanding efficacy "in action and utterance, and the power of speech, to move men's minds," I wish to see this strong amalgamation of influence on *every* theatre of public exhibition, where the happy topics of truth, and good and moral excellence are held forth to the world, that the arguments may be irresistible, that every species of imposition, and every fortress of the empire of evil may be pulled down, that the enemies of truth may become her friends, that the kingdom of iniquity may be shaken, that "the stones of her streets may rise in mu-tiny."

Now having given you some view of my topic from the present ardour and enthusiasm that I feel, I will state to you my meaning as soberly as I can. I wish all public speakers to be aware of the lamentable con-

2 *On the cultivation of a talent for Oratory.* [July.

sequence of an imperfect and inarticulate delivery. If in any argument part of the chain of the argument be interrupted, what will follow? Suppose in the 47th of Euclid only part of the argument of that wonderful demonstration be evident to the mind, consider the result; the mind not receiving full conviction of its important truth, is obliged to hang an implicit faith on the authority of this master in mathematics, and is only half pleased. You know what joy results from the full conviction of truth, what a grateful consciousness in the mind that it was capable of its reception, the sensation is truly divine, resembling that of deity himself, when he beheld his work and saw that it was good. Now if such are the results from the conviction of mathematical truths, and such the necessity of attention and application for the reception of that full conviction, then, I argue, what joy shall follow the reception of truths moral and divine, which the heaven-born mind must receive and consent to when offered to it. I understand there are many unbelievers within the pale of christian communities; I beg it may be considered if this is not consequent to the imperfect communication of the truths of christianity, from those who are called up to minister of her holy things. The human voice is in its nature formed for persuasion. I desire that this proposition may receive due consideration. Speech is one of our sublime attributes, imparted by the divinity in the formation of his creature, man; it is to be the vehicle of his thoughts, and those divine sentiments conveyed to him from the author of his existence, when he framed that wonderful composition, man; delivering to him and investing him with a portion of his divine essence, making him a recipient of truth and good; now,

if there were but one man in the world, and according to scripture that was once the case, conceive what a wonderful creature should be that one man; "lord of the creation; in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a God! the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!" but is this creature less noble because multiplied on the face of the earth? Surely no; but his superior parts and talents enhanced highly by the joint co-operation of many human minds. Now then, I call on your readers to join me in enforcing on men's minds the great importance of aiming at perfecting these high talents with which this noble creature is invested. Speech, the power of communication, the art of persuasion, the forming by rules reduced to a mathematical precision the exercise of this talent. I am sorry to say, that when I have entered the church or the theatre with a sincere mind to be edified, I have been affected with sorrow and disgust at being uninformed of what the matter was, which was addressed to me, through the inarticulate speech of the exhibitor; and I have come away with the more disgust in proportion as I conceived the subject to be important in either of these departments; in one I have witnessed a low puling voice and poor ungraceful attitude and action, a looking down at the book and up at the audience with a truly ridiculous gesture, like water-towl when they duck their heads and pop up again; in the other I have heard the passion torn to rags, and witnessed all the other acts of outrage, which the great master of scenical exhibition describes with a prophetic energy. Now since all the world is improving in arts, in science, in literature, in manners, in morals, why is

there not a school for oratory ? and if there be, why not send these boys to school, before you send them into the pulpit, or the rostrum, or any other public place of exhibition ? Who are the professors in these schools ? what sort of specimens do they display ? I have attended public lectures and examinations in colleges ; I protest I have been made sick with the miserable display, and have augured therefrom all the evil, and all the foul defect of which I now complain. The human voice is capable of the greatest heights of beauty and excellence, if cultivated ; it is made for persuasion, the great chef-d'œuvre of its attributes ; it is made to carry persuasion into the ears almost of the deaf. It was this that in early ages subdued savages, rent rocks, tamed lions and tigers, and reared the Theban wall ; your classical readers will see that I allude to Orpheus and Amphion ; and I know not why like influence may not now be expected, for if sound from an instrument of human formation can influence men's minds by it sweet accords, then surely when sense is joined to sound, when not only the ear, but the intellect is addressed ; when the organ of utterance is not of man's framing, but is wholly divine ; when human cultivation and education are applied still farther to develop its energies, to unfold its latent beauties and capabilities, what may we not expect ? When christianity brings forward her thundering appeal to the minds of men in aid of philosophy, in aid of vocal sound, and the organs of intelligence ; may we not hope to see another son of Calliope or of Linus, another Orpheus or Amphion persuade to relinquish savage nature, to check the rage of war, and chain the furies of civil discord ? I anticipate with delight the coming of

the day, dawning on the creation ; for I think, seeing that mankind are now only stumbling and blundering in argument, and falling one over another in political dissension, it is evident that the day of truth is scarcely dawned on the world. It would indeed be a dreadful thing to think that the world was always to continue in the mad disordered state of the present day. Once more then, let me close with begging that you would enforce upon the world, or at least your readers, the due attention to the improvement of the human voice, as the principal instrument of improvement, vouchsafed by Providence to carry strong persuasion with commanding efficacy into the minds of men.

I am, your constant reader,

HUMANUS.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

IN spite of a vigorous opposition by writing, reasoning, and declamation ; in defiance of the dictates of conscience, remonstrance and protest, a £.50 bill of Regium Donum forced its way into the house of a respectable clergyman. Upon this disastrous event, the venerable pastor, wisely judging, that " in the multitude of counsellors there is safety," immediately called a meeting of his parishioners, and laid before them the perilous and perplexing nature of the case. Vain, however, were all their consultations, fruitless were all the expedients proposed, the intrusive bill continued to retain forcible possession.

But this is not all. Though the gentleman always has been, and though he still continues to be, a professed enemy to all religious establishments; royal bounties, and classifications, yet, every half year,